



# Intergovernmental organizations' normative commitments to policy integration: The dominance of environmental goals

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## ARTICLE INFO

### Keywords:

Climate  
Energy  
Environment  
Intergovernmental organizations  
Policy integration

## ABSTRACT

Intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) influence policymaking in states by devising and promoting policy ideas. In this study, we examine to what extent a set of IGOs make normative commitments to integrate environmental concerns as well as to contrast this commitment to environmental policy integration (EPI) with climate policy integration (CPI) and energy policy integration (EnPI). Which characteristics of an IGO increase its likelihood to make a normative commitment to EPI? Do environment-related IGOs commit themselves to integrate environmental policy with concerns regarding climate change and/or energy? What is the ratio between the IGOs' normative commitments to EPI relative to CPI and EnPI? Drawing on primary law texts of 78 IGOs, we find that organizations concentrating on Europe and IGOs in which the European Union (EU) Commission participates are more likely to commit themselves to EPI. Furthermore, the sectors covered by IGOs matter: organizations active in the field of general economic concerns and multi-issue IGOs are more likely than IGOs assigned to the 'other' category for embracing EPI. These findings still hold when controlling for the time when an IGO adopted its original or amended relevant primary law, its membership size and whether it is a United Nations organization. Environment-related IGOs commit themselves to a limited degree of CPI and EnPI. More broadly, the IGOs' normative commitment to EPI clearly dominates over their commitment to EnPI and CPI.

## 1. Introduction

Policy analysis has shown that to be successful, sectoral policies need to take into account the objectives of, and the activities in, other policy sectors as to avoid inconsistencies or to attain synergies. The corresponding literature refers to this theme by using different terminology and correspondingly paying attention to different features such as the process of policymaking or its outcome (see, e.g., [Tosun and Lang, 2017](#)). The terms used in the literature to study this phenomenon range from 'policy coherence' (e.g. [May et al., 2006](#)) to 'coordination' (e.g. [Peters, 1998, 2015](#)), and from the 'nexus' approach (e.g. [Visseren-Hamakers, 2015](#)) to 'policy integration' (e.g. [Candel and Biesbroek, 2016](#); [Lafferty and Hovden, 2003](#); [Nilsson and Persson, 2003, 2017](#); [Runhaar et al., 2014](#)). In this study, similar to the other contributions to this special issue, we use the notion of policy integration (see [Persson et al., this issue](#)).

The concept of policy integration dates back to the early 1970s and

coincides with the emergence of environmental policy as a policy domain in its own right. Upon its first appearance, the concept was discussed under the term 'mainstreaming' and referred to the development of instruments that would align environmental policy with other policy domains. After producing disappointing results, the concept disappeared for a while, only to reappear on the political agenda in 1987 with the publication of the Brundtland Report and its promotion of sustainable development as the simultaneous realization of goals related to economic, ecological and social development ([Jacob et al., 2008](#), p. 24; see also [Fleig and Tosun, 2017](#)). Politically, policy integration started to become popular in the early 1990s, subsequent to the United Nations (UN) Conference on Environment and Development in 1992,<sup>1</sup> and has since been embraced by a growing number of national governments and international organizations. While policy integration is not limited to the environmental policy domain (see [Tosun and Lang, 2017](#)), given its origin, it is predominantly associated with environmental policy integration (EPI). In the European Union (EU), for

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<sup>1</sup> In this context, it should be noted that, according to the [Jordan and Lenschow \(2010, p. 149\)](#), the action plan Agenda 21 adopted at the 1992 Earth Summit (re)introduced some ambiguity with regards to the meaning of the concept.

instance, EPI is included in Article 11 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU and therefore even enjoys a ‘quasi-constitutional’ status (Jordan and Lenschow, 2010, p. 149).

Considering that the international level has been influential in making an initial case for the need of EPI (see, e.g., [Biermann et al., 2009](#); [Nilsson et al., 2009](#); [Oberthür, 2009](#)), in this study, we strive to learn more about the presence of EPI among international organizations. While we acknowledge the variety of organizations involved in global environmental governance (e.g. [Hale and Held, 2011](#); [Jordan et al., 2015](#); [Van de Graaf and Colgan, 2016](#)), we concentrate on intergovernmental organizations’ (IGOs) ‘normative commitment’ to EPI. Following [Nilsson and Persson \(2017, p. 36\)](#), we define normative commitment as the IGOs’ willingness to define “constitutional and legal provisions to consider environmental objectives in policy formation and implementation”. While we are predominantly interested in advancing our understanding of how IGOs commit themselves to EPI, we are equally interested in learning whether EPI dominates over commitments to other forms of cross-sectoral policy integration. Since environmental policy is closely interrelated with the governance of climate change and energy (e.g. [Visseren-Hamakers, 2015](#)), thus our empirical investigation also covers climate policy integration (CPI) and energy policy integration (EnPI).

A joint analysis of EPI, CPI and EnPI is potentially instructive since these three concepts of policy integration are also integral components of one another, and therefore it is worth examining the relationship between them. [Tosun and Solorio \(2011\)](#) regard EPI to include the integration of environmental and energy policy goals, whilst [Jordan and Lenschow \(2010\)](#) conceptualize CPI as a component of EPI. Departing from the latter observation, [Adelle and Russel \(2013, p. 1\)](#) make an effort to illuminate the relationship between CPI and EPI and find that “CPI is less about ambitious and expansive integration across all policy sectors and more about engaging a narrower set of sectors to work together in particular ways to meet specific goals”. This view lines up with the assessment by [Nilsson and Nilsson \(2005\)](#) that to be effective, climate policy must become integrated with agriculture, energy and transport policy. A great deal of empirical studies of CPI have concentrated on the energy sector and investigated how climate and energy policy have become integrated (e.g. [Dupont and Oberthür, 2012](#)), which indicates the strong ties between CPI and EnPI. While investigating the interrelationships between EPI, CPI and EnPI is likely to help us obtain a clearer understanding of each of these concepts individually, the conceptual overlaps are also challenging and warrant enhanced attention when operationalizing EPI, CPI and EnPI (see [Schmidt and Fleig, this issue](#)). Given our primary research focus on the normative commitment of IGOs to EPI, together with our secondary research interest, seeking to contrast the IGOs’ commitment to EPI, CPI and EnPI, we are confident to provide a contribution to the literature.

Which characteristics of an IGO increase its likelihood to make a normative commitment to EPI? Do environment-related IGOs commit themselves to integrate environmental policy with concerns regarding climate change and/or energy? What is the ratio between the IGOs’ normative commitments to EPI relative to CPI and EnPI? To address these questions, we examine data for 78 IGOs active in different fields of global governance. The database is comprised of statements that are integral parts of the respective IGO’s primary law texts such as agreements, conventions or treaties.

The remainder of this paper unfolds as follows. We first briefly discuss what policy studies can gain from the analytical lens adopted by this study. Next, we move on to the theoretical framework and develop empirically testable hypotheses. Subsequently, we delve into the details of the IGOs included in the analysis and explain their characteristics, followed by clarifications on the coding of the data. In a next step, we present and discuss our empirical findings. The paper closes with a summary of our most important insights and offers some concluding remarks.

## 2. What policy studies can learn from studying intergovernmental organizations

In this study, we concentrate on how legal documents of IGOs reflect the form of policy integration to which certain IGOs are committed. IGOs are organizations that consist of states only, or states and other IGOs, and which are established by treaties signed by lawful representatives of the national governments and IGOs that are members to them ([Pevehouse et al., 2004](#)). As the individual members must ratify the membership treaty, we presume that their interests determine which themes an IGO engages in (see [Abbott and Snidal, 1998](#)).

While IGOs have originally been the subject of studies in International Relations (e.g. [Van de Graaf, 2013](#)), they have increasingly become a topic of interest to policy studies (e.g. [Fergusson and Yeates, 2014](#); [Jordan et al., 2015](#); [Stone and Ladi, 2015](#)). Policy ideas are an important concept for linking IGOs to domestic policymaking in the individual countries. According to [Fergusson and Yeates \(2014\)](#), IGOs are forums where policy ideas are generated, which subsequently have an impact on the outcome of domestic policy processes. From this perspective, and as already pointed out by [Biermann et al. \(2009\)](#), [Nilsson et al. \(2009\)](#) and [Oberthür \(2009\)](#), studying IGOs offers valuable insights into the origin of ideas about EPI and other forms of policy integration. In addition, adopting an analytical lens that concentrates on IGOs is instructive for learning about how the corresponding policy ideas on policy integration have diffused across countries and/or international organizations (see, e.g., [Jacob et al., 2008](#)) and reached other actors involved in international regimes (see [Hale and Held, 2011](#)). In other words, from the perspective of policy studies, we can conceive IGOs to be relevant actors at the agenda-setting stage of the domestic policy processes, which may result in the adoption and implementation of innovative policy instruments such as EPI, CPI or EnPI (see [Persson et al., this issue](#)).

We consider the role of IGOs to be limited in determining the exact form and scope of policy integration ‘on the ground’ as IGOs often just acknowledge the need for operational activities but do not propose concrete steps. The outcome of the corresponding domestic policy process can, in principle, lead to a wide range of policy approaches by national governments to implement different types of policy integration (see, e.g., [Jacob et al., 2008](#); [Nilsson and Persson, 2017](#); [Tosun and Leininger, 2017](#)). While this aspect lies outside the purview of this study, we are confident to provide a point of departure for future research on the role of IGOs for starting and shaping domestic policy processes and how these affect the forms of policy integration eventually embraced and implemented by national governments.

## 3. Theoretical considerations and hypotheses

In this study, our foremost endeavor is to explain the IGOs’ normative commitment to EPI. This means that even though we are also interested in CPI and EnPI, the scope of our theoretical reasoning is limited to exploring which characteristics of IGOs are likely to increase their likelihood to commit themselves to EPI. We selected IGOs as the unit of analysis because of the statement by [Nilsson et al. \(2009, p. 338\)](#) that the sectorization of policies remains strong in international organizations, but that pressures have been mounting in the last few years to integrate different policy areas.

The International Relations literature provides numerous explanations for the design of IGOs. In this study, we consider EPI to represent one dimension of the IGOs’ design – this point will become more plausible in the next sections when we turn to the coding of the data. The design of IGOs is, *inter alia*, the outcome of the characteristics of its membership base (see [Tallberg et al., 2016](#)), its voting rules (see [Blake and Payton, 2015](#)), and the preferences and strategies of bureaucrats working in the IGOs (see [Johnson and Urpelainen, 2014](#)).

While we are aware of the rich literature in International Relations, we advance an argument here that originates from the intersection

between International Relations and EU studies. It draws on the literature that acknowledges the EU's ambition to act as a leader in international environmental (and climate) politics (e.g. [Elgström, 2007](#); [Jørgensen et al., 2011](#); [Kelemen and Vogel, 2010](#); [Oberthür and Roche Kelly, 2008](#); [Schulze and Tosun, 2013](#)). Considering that the EU committed itself to EPI in 1992 in the Maastricht Treaty ([Nilsson and Persson, 2017](#), p. 36) and taking into account the EU's (aspired/actual) leadership in international environmental politics, we expect IGOs that predominantly or exclusively consist of EU member states and the states in the EU's neighborhood (see [Schulze and Tosun, 2013](#)) to be more likely to commit themselves to EPI.

**H1a.** *IGOs with a geographical focus on Europe have a greater likelihood of committing themselves to EPI.*

Along the same lines, we expect the EU's membership to affect an IGO's chance of embracing EPI. Having said that, we must bear in mind that the EU – or to be more precise: the EU Commission – cannot become a formal member of IGOs that consist of states only (see, e.g., [Elgström, 2007](#)). In such cases, the EU is represented in an IGO through the membership of the EU member states.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, to gauge the impact of the EU's involvement in an IGO on that IGO's willingness to commit itself to EPI, we have to pay attention to both the participation of the EU's member states as well as the EU Commission's membership in IGOs. We expect both the membership of the EU member states and of the Commission to increase the likelihood for an IGO to make a normative commitment to EPI.

**H1b.** *IGOs in which the EU member states participate have a greater likelihood of committing themselves to EPI.*

**H1c.** *IGOs in which the EU Commission participates have a greater likelihood of committing themselves to EPI.*

The second set of variables concentrates on the sectoral affiliation of IGOs. As briefly touched upon in the introduction, environmental policy has strong interlinkages with energy issues (see [Tosun and Solorio, 2011](#)). From this perspective, we expect energy-related IGOs to be particularly prone to embrace EPI in their primary law texts. Likewise, the emergence and diffusion of the concept of sustainable development (i.e., the mutual realization of economic, ecological and social goals; see [Lenschow, 2002](#); [Jordan and Lenschow, 2010](#); [Fleig and Tosun, 2017](#); [Tosun and Leininger, 2017](#)) could have induced economy-related IGOs to commit themselves to EPI as well. Lastly, considering that environmental protection is widely regarded a crosscutting theme, we posit that IGOs working on multiple topics are more likely to embrace EPI than single-issue organizations (see [Tosun and Lang, 2017](#)). These three considerations culminate in the next set of hypotheses.

**H2a.** *IGOs working on energy issues have a greater likelihood of committing themselves to EPI.*

**H2b.** *IGOs working on economic issues have a greater likelihood of committing themselves to EPI.*

**H2c.** *IGOs working on multiple issues have a greater likelihood of committing themselves to EPI.*

In addition to these focal explanatory variables, we need to control for the time elapsed since the adoption of the document we consulted in order to code EPI, whether an IGO belongs to the UN system and what its membership size is. UN organizations have specific functional competences and due to the marked degree of differentiation and specialization, they may have a lower likelihood of committing themselves to EPI. The greater the membership base of an IGO, the more difficult it can be to reach agreement on the commitment to EPI. Given the fact

that EPI started to take off in the late 1980s and early 1990s, we expect that younger IGOs or IGOs that more recently changed their primary law are more likely to refer to EPI than their counterparts, i.e., older organizations or organizations that did not update their primary law.

#### 4. Methods

For the purpose of this analysis, we only consider organizations as IGOs that consist of states only or of states and other IGOs, have a minimum of three states as members, have a minimal level of formal institutionalization, including permanent staff, a secretariat and/or a headquarters ([Pevehouse et al., 2004](#)). The IGOs to be included in the analysis have to still exist in 2017. To identify organizations that meet these criteria, we build on the Correlates of War V2.3 International Governmental Organizations Data ([Pevehouse et al., 2004](#)), which includes a total number of 347 IGOs. We complement the original dataset with an updated version as constructed by [Blake and Payton \(2015\)](#). In addition, we draw on [Van de Graaf and Colgan \(2016\)](#) to add energy-related IGOs to the dataset.

[Blake and Payton \(2015\)](#) assign each IGO into one of 10 issues areas, which capture the organization's founding charter and main activities. These issue categories include international security, economics, health, transportation, labor, environment, human rights, science and education, telecommunications, and multi-issue. All IGOs that do not fit into one of these categories are coded as belonging to an eleventh category labelled 'other'. [Blake and Payton \(2015\)](#) further differentiate between three subcategories of economy-related IGOs: banks/funds, commodity, and general economy-related IGOs. The latter category of general economy-related IGOs also includes regional trade organizations.<sup>3</sup> The 78 IGOs selected represent a sample of the 347 IGOs covered by [Pevehouse et al. \(2004\)](#). The IGOs selected comprise all energy-related IGOs (8) and all environment-related IGOs, for which we could find primary law texts (28). We randomly selected 27 IGOs working on economic issues, which fall into the three subtypes identified by [Blake and Payton \(2015\)](#). For the remaining IGOs, we randomly selected three for each of the following categories: health, transportation, science and education, multi-issue, and the residual category 'other'. This group of non-energy and non-environment IGOs has the overall size of 42. Due to a comparatively low thematic connection with climate, energy and environmental issues, IGOs working on international security, labor, and human rights are excluded.

As [Tosun and Peters \(in press\)](#) show in [Table 1](#), the sector with the greatest number of IGOs selected refers to those active in the field of environmental protection. Evidently, we will exclude the environment-related IGOs when we analyze the determinants of IGOs' commitment to EPI, leaving us with 50 cases. However, the environment-related IGOs will become important when we address the second and the third research question.

One of the most widely cited definitions of EPI requires policy-makers to give 'principled priority' to environmental objectives over all other policy objectives ([Lafferty and Hovden, 2003](#)). In light of the variety of societal challenges IGOs are dealing with, this conception is of limited value since it is unlikely that IGOs will prioritize environmental objectives over their respective organizational objectives, and we can even doubt that this would be desirable. What is a more useful concept is to differentiate between 'coordination' and 'harmonization' as suggested by [Nilsson and Persson \(2017\)](#), [Persson et al. \(this issue\)](#) and [Runhaar et al. \(2014\)](#). According to these authors, EPI by means of coordination aims to avoid contradictory sectoral policies or to compensate for adverse environmental consequences of sectoral policies,

<sup>2</sup> For a discussion of the effects of such constellations as well as constellations where both the EU Commission and the member states participate in IGOs and multilateral negotiations, see [Oberthür and Gehring \(2006\)](#).

<sup>3</sup> We decided to exclude the EU for two reasons: first, the EU is assigned explanatory power in the analysis (see H1a–c); second, it would be difficult to justify that the EU with its complex institutional setup and extraordinary degree of integration compares to other regional trade organizations.

**Table 1**  
Summary statistics.

H	Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max	Source
	EPI	50	0.44	0.50	0	1	Own coding
1a	Multi-region	78	0.47	0.50	0	1	Own coding
1a	Europe	78	0.12	0.32	0	1	Own coding
1b	United Kingdom	78	0.47	0.50	0	1	Own coding
1c	EU Commission	78	0.22	0.42	0	1	Own coding
2a	Energy	78	0.06	0.25	0	1	Own coding
2b	Bank	78	0.10	0.31	0	1	Payton and Blake (2015)
2b	Commodity	78	0.12	0.32	0	1	Payton and Blake (2015)
2b	Economy general	78	0.12	0.32	0	1	Payton and Blake (2015)
2c	Multi-issue	78	0.06	0.25	0	1	Payton and Blake (2015)
	Other	78	0.18	0.39	0	1	Payton and Blake (2015)
	Membership size	78	5.41	2.92	1	10	Own coding
	United Nations	78	0.18	0.39	0	1	Own coding
	Post 1987	78	0.74	0.44	0	1	Own coding

whereas harmonization seeks to bring environmental objectives onto equal terms with sectoral objectives.

To code EPI, CPI or EnPI we rely on primary law texts of IGOs such as agreements, charters, conventions, constitutions, declarations, protocols, statutes, and treaties (see [Panke and Stapel, 2016](#)) and draw on the preambles and/or the sections that refer to the organizations' aims and functions.<sup>4</sup> [Table 2](#) in the same data article reports the parts of the primary law texts consulted for the coding of the data. The use of primary law texts represents a conservative approach to the empirical assessment of commitments to policy integration. However, the selection of these data sources rests on the assumption that this is a particularly strong indication of a commitment to policy integration.

We code a statement in an IGO's primary text as a commitment to policy integration by means of harmonization if the IGO concerned indicates that policy objectives from a different domain (e.g. environmental protection) should be promoted alongside policy objectives corresponding to its own domain (e.g. trade promotion). A case in point is the International Cocoa Organization (ICCO), which is based on the International Cocoa Agreement (2010), and which commits itself in that document to "promot[ing] sustainable cocoa economy in economic, social and environmental terms" (Article 1).

Coordination recognizes adverse effects of sectoral policies and the need to internalize the corresponding negative externalities. This form of policy integration calls for adopting a perspective that goes beyond the respective sector in which an IGO is active, but it is functionally limited to attaining the goal of mitigating, reducing or stopping adverse effects from spilling over to other sectoral policies. The logic of policy integration by means of coordination can be illustrated by the following statement in Article 3 of the Lima Agreement (1973) founding the Latin American Energy Organization (OLADE):

"To promote among the Member States the adoption of effective measures to prevent environmental pollution due to the exploitation, transportation, storage, and utilization of the energy resources of the Region and to recommend the measures deemed necessary to prevent environmental pollution caused by the exploitation, transportation, storage, and utilization of the energy resources within the Region, in areas not under the jurisdiction of the Member States".

OLADE's organizational goal is to promote energy-related cooperation the region, but the organization recognizes the negative externalities caused by energy governance on the environment and

supports measures to compensate for these adverse effects. However, OLADE's sole goal remains the promotion of coordinated energy governance.

The above definitions and examples refer to the integration of one sectoral policy with a policy located in another sector. [Biermann et al. \(2009\)](#) refer to this as 'external integration' and call for differentiating between this form and 'internal integration' when studying EPI at the international level. Internal integration involves the combination of different types of goals that however concern the same policy domain. For example, an organization that seeks to promote the preservation of water quality may also support measures aiming for improving water quantity, which we would interpret as an instance of internal policy integration since the goals concern the same policy domain, which in this case is environmental protection. Compared to external integration, identifying internal integration (i.e., integration within the same policy domain) is more demanding since it requires a careful assessment of the individual IGOs' organizational aims. The goal of the Plant Protection Committee of the Southern Cone (COSAVE), for example, is to promote cooperation on plant health – a remarkably specific organizational objective. However, this organization is also committed to fostering environmental protection in general, which we code as an instance of internal integration, or more precisely, internal policy integration by means of harmonization (see [Table 2](#)).

EPI, CPI and EnPI are integral concepts. One form of EPI can be to integrate environmental concerns with energy governance (see [Tosun and Solorio, 2011](#)). Here we speak of EPI if a non-environment IGO acknowledges the need to take into account environmental considerations. CPI is about non-climate IGOs committing themselves to climate-related goals. EnPI is about non-energy IGOs referring to energy concerns in their organizational goals. More generally, our criterion for differentiating between EPI, CPI and EnPI is the 'importation' of environmental, climate and energy goals into the aims and scope of an IGO active in a different sector. Our definition does not claim that EPI, CPI and EnPI are alternative types of commitment, but that the difference between them stems from the sectoral affiliation of the individual IGOs. Integrating climate or energy concerns into an environmental IGO is considered as external policy integration and goes by the term CPI or EnPI, respectively, since an environment-related IGO accepts to pay attention to goals originating from either of these two policy domains. If an energy-related organization or an IGO based in an entirely different sector acknowledges environmental goals, this would also correspond to external policy integration, but now to EPI.

Turning to the explanatory variables, we need to include a binary variable indicating whether the geographical scope of an IGO is *Europe*. To be able to contrast the finding for Europe, we also add a variable that captures whether an IGO's geographical scope comprises multiple regions (*Multi-region*). Since all EU member states demonstrate the same or a very similar membership pattern in the IGOs analyzed here, we use information for the membership of the *United Kingdom* to test H1b. The United Kingdom is one of the two EU member states that are permanent members of the UN Security Council; the other one is France.<sup>5</sup> The variable *EU Commission* indicates whether this organization is a formal member of an IGO. The next set of variables indicates whether an IGO works on the following sectors: *Energy*, *Bank*, *Commodity*, *Economy general*, *Multi-issue*, or *Other*.

The first control variable gauges the *Membership size* of the individual IGOs as reported on their official websites in the year 2017. Instead of using the absolute number, we opt for a scale based on deciles to make the information more readily comparable. This coding exercise produces a variable that ranges from 1 (smallest membership size) to 10 (biggest membership size). The second control variable indicates whether an IGO is affiliated with the *United Nations*. Since

<sup>4</sup> The type of primary law texts and the date when these documents were produced can be inferred from [Table 1](#) in [Tosun and Peters \(in press\)](#).

<sup>5</sup> Substituting the United Kingdom with France does not change the results of the logit models (see [Table 4](#) in [Tosun and Peters \(in press\)](#)).



**Table 2**  
Normative commitments to policy integration.

ID	IGO	Sector	Organizational goals	Internal integration	External integration	Coordination vs. harmonization
1	International Energy Agency (IEA)	Energy	Reduce dependence on imported oil	Energy conservation; renewable energy; research on energy	Climate protection	Internal: coordination External: coordination
2	International Energy Forum (IEF)	Energy	Energy market transparency, stability, sustainability	Security of energy supply; trade and investment in energy	Environmental protection	Internal: harmonization External: coordination
3	Latin American Energy Organization (OLADE)	Energy	Energy-related cooperation	Integration, protection, conservation, utilization, marketing, defense of energy	Environmental protection	Internal: harmonization External: coordination
4	Energy Community Treaty (ECT)	Energy	Common energy market	Regulation, market framework, security of supply, energy efficiency, renewable energy	Climate protection; environmental protection	Internal: harmonization External: harmonization
8	International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA)	Energy	Promotion of renewable energy	Security of supply, energy prices, access to energy, energy efficiency	Climate protection; environmental protection	Internal: harmonization External: harmonization
13	Plant Protection Committee of the Southern Cone (COSAVE)	Environment	Cooperation on plant health	Environmental protection	(Not on climate protection or energy)	Internal: harmonization External: harmonization
15	European and Mediterranean Plant Protection Organization (EPPO)	Environment	Assuring of plant health	Animal health; environmental protection	(Not on climate protection or energy)	Internal: harmonization External: harmonization
16	Valdivia Group	Environment	International cooperation on the environment		Climate protection	External: harmonization
17	Group on Earth Observations (GEO)	Environment	Earth observation	Sustainable development	Climate protection; energy	Internal: harmonization External: harmonization
27	Latin American Fisheries Development Organization (OLDEPESCA)	Environment	Use of fishery resources	Environmental protection		Internal: harmonization External: harmonization
34	South Asia Cooperative Environment Program (SACEP)	Environment	Protection, management and enhancement of the environment		Climate protection; energy	External: harmonization
35	Central Africa Forest Commission (COMIFAC)	Environment	Forest conservation	Reforestation	(Not on climate protection or energy)	Internal: harmonization
43	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)	Bank	Reconstruction and development of economies	Not applicable	Environmental protection	External: Harmonization
46	International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO)	Commodity	Promotion of trade in tropical timber	Not applicable	Environmental protection	External: Harmonization
47	International Cocoa Organization (ICCO)	Commodity	Strengthening the global cocoa sector	Not applicable	Environmental protection	External: Harmonization
48	International Coffee Organization (ICO)	Commodity	Strengthening the coffee sector	Not applicable	Environmental protection	External: Harmonization
54	International Olive Council (IOC)	Commodity	Promotion of the olive sector	Not applicable	Environmental protection	External: Harmonization
55	UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)	Economy	Promotion of industrialization	Not applicable	Environmental protection	External: Coordination
57	World Trade Organization (WTO)	Economy	Promotion of free trade	Not applicable	Environmental protection	External: Harmonization
58	Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)	Economy	Economic integration	Not applicable	Environmental protection; energy	External: Harmonization
59	Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC)	Economy	Economic integration	Not applicable	Environmental protection; energy	External: Harmonization
60	Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR)	Economy	Economic integration	Not applicable	Environmental protection	External: Harmonization
61	North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)	Economy	Economic integration	Not applicable	Environmental protection; energy	External: Harmonization
63	Andean Community (CAN)	Economy	Economic integration	Not applicable	Environmental protection	External: Harmonization
64	World Health Organization (WHO)	Health	Public health	Not applicable	Environmental protection	External: Coordination
67	UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)	Multi-issue	Information on nutrition, food and agriculture and its derivatives	Not applicable	Environmental protection	External: Harmonization

(continued on next page)

Table 2 (continued)

ID	IGO	Sector	Organizational goals	Internal integration	External integration	Coordination vs. harmonization
68	Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)	Multi-issue	Economic union	Not applicable	Energy	External: Harmonization
69	Pacific Islands Forum (PIF)	Multi-issue	Regional cooperation and integration	Not applicable	Environmental protection	External: Harmonization
70	World Meteorological Organization (WMO)	Other	Facilitate cooperation in meteorology	Not applicable	Climate and environmental protection	External: Harmonization
72	Working Community of the Danube Countries (ARGE)	Other	Regional cooperation	Not applicable	Environmental protection	External: Harmonization
77	International Maritime Organization (IMO)	Transport	Facilitate international co-operation in shipping	Not applicable	Environmental protection	External: Coordination

Notes: Authors' own coding of the data. The sector categorizations taken from [Blake and Payton \(2015\)](#) were modified to additionally include 'energy'. This table only includes IGOs that committed themselves to policy integration in their primary law documents. For a full list of IGOs considered here, see [Table 1](#) in [Tosun and Peters \(in press\)](#).

*Membership size* and *United Nations* are highly correlated, they will enter the logit models separately. A third control variable captures whether the relevant (original/amended) primary law text was adopted after 1987 (*Post 1987*), which corresponds to the date of the publication of the Brundtland Report and the 'invention' of EPI (see [Jacob et al., 2008](#)).<sup>6</sup> [Table 1](#) reports the summary statistics for the variables and data sources, and indicates to which hypothesis they belong.

## 5. Presentation and discussion of the findings

We begin the empirical analysis with an assessment of research questions 2 and 3 since they are of a descriptive nature and their discussion paves the way for answering the first research question. [Table 2](#) presents information on the 31 IGOs (out of 78 in total) that commit themselves to internal and/or external policy integration together with an indication of the sector to which they belong and what their organizational goals are.

Of the eight energy-related IGOs included in the dataset, five commit themselves to both internal and external policy integration. The International Energy Agency (IEA) recognizes the need to coordinate measures aiming to increase the security of supply with energy conservation, renewable energy promotion, and the need for research on energy. Since the promotion of renewable energy is the main policy tool used in climate policy (see [Schmidt and Fleig, this issue](#)), we regard this as an indication of IEA's commitment to integrating energy and climate policy by means of coordination. The International Energy Forum (IEF) and OLADE commit themselves to coordinate energy policy with environmental protection. The Energy Community Treaty (ECT) and the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) commit themselves to harmonizing energy policy with climate and environmental protection.

Of the 28 environment-related IGOs, only seven support internal or external integration in terms of EnPI or CPI. COSAVE, the European and Mediterranean Plant Protection Organization (EPPO), and the Latin American Fisheries Development Organization (OLDEPESCA) commit themselves to internal integration with other environmental policy goals by means of harmonization. The Central Africa Forest Commission (COMIFAC) explicitly recognizes external policy integration together with the need for internal policy integration, but in its primary law, this organization does not refer to energy or climate issues. A commitment to climate protection and energy governance is made by the Group on Earth Observations (GEO) and the South Asia Cooperative Environment Program (SACEP). Lastly, the so-called Valdivia Group is worth noting for its commitment to CPI by means of harmonization.

Turning to the next set of IGOs, we do not take into account the internal dimension of commitments to policy integration since these organizations do not (primarily) work on climate, energy or environmental issues. Thus, we now only focus on the external dimension of EPI, EnPI and CPI. Of the 27 economy-related IGOs, nine commit themselves to EPI and three to EPI together with EnPI. Two observations are worth noting in this context. First, only one bank – the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) – makes a normative commitment to EPI. Second, with the exception of the UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the economy-related IGOs commit themselves to policy integration by means of harmonization. The most marked form of EPI and EnPI can be observed for the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). In the case of EPI, NAFTA is also exceptional since the integration of environmental and economic goals are defined in detail in an environmental side agreement (see [Boås, 2000](#); [Evans and Kay, 2008](#)). More generally, the regional trade organizations are aware of policy integration and support

<sup>6</sup> [Table 5](#) in [Tosun and Peters \(in press\)](#) reports logit models with an alternative measurement that captures the years elapsed since the adoption of the relevant primary law.

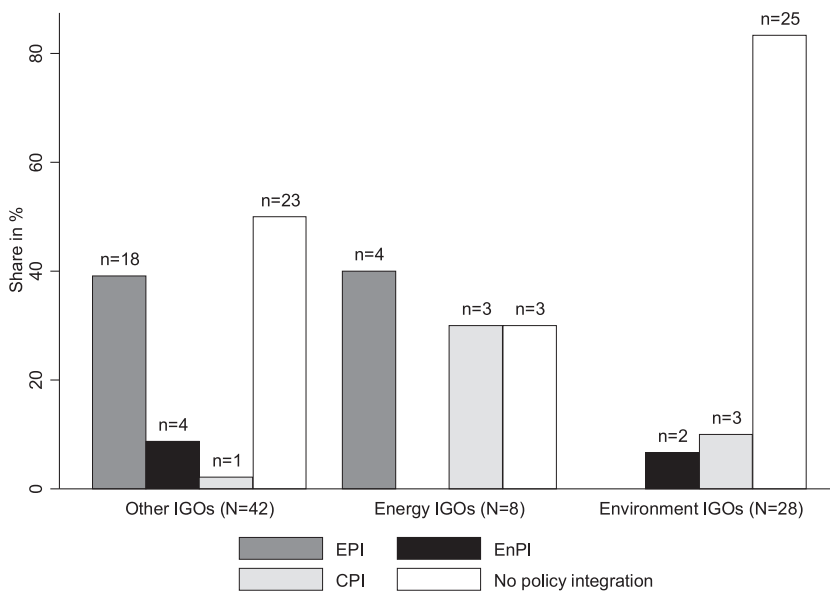


Fig. 1. Share of policy integration commitments concerning climate, energy and environment policy broken down by sector.

it: the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) support both EPI and EnPI, whereas the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) and the Andean Community (CAN) commit themselves to EPI. Furthermore, the World Trade Organization (WTO) has embraced EPI. The observations for the trade organizations align with findings in the literature that trade policy has been particularly susceptible to a ‘greening’ and therefore to EPI (see Evans and Kay, 2008; Schulze and Tosun, 2013).

With the remaining IGOs, it is important to note that all multi-issue IGOs included embrace policy integration. The Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) and the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) commit themselves to EPI, whereas the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) supports the integration of economic policy with energy policy. Furthermore, the Working Community of the Danube Countries (ARGE) and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) support EPI or EPI together with CPI, respectively. In this last group, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the International Maritime Organization (IMO) are the only IGOs that support policy integration by means of coordination.

Fig. 1 gives an overview of the share of normative commitments to integrating a sectoral policy goal with climate, energy and/or environmental goals. The type of policy integration taken into consideration is external policy integration. The figure does not differentiate between coordination and harmonization. The bar graphs are presented separately for the energy, environmental and other sectors. This has implications for the interpretation of the bar graphs since the basis for calculating the share differs across the three categories. The basis for the first category ‘other’ is 42, for the second category ‘energy’ it is 8, and for the third category ‘environment’ it is 28. Therefore, the share of IGOs committed to different types of policy integration should be primarily contrasted within and not across the categories. This means that among the environment-related IGOs, those committed to cross-sectoral policy integration are more committed to integration with climate ( $n = 3$ ) than with energy issues ( $n = 2$ ). However, environment-related IGOs are less committed to policy integration than their counterparts as indicated by the great share of statements where no reference to policy integration is made ( $n = 25$ ). Energy-related IGOs are more committed to integrating energy policy goals with environmental protection ( $n = 4$ ) than with climate change ( $n = 3$ ), and only three IGOs working on energy issues do not mention environmental or climate goals. IGOs working on non-environment and non-energy topics clearly prefer integrating their policy goals with environmental protection ( $n = 18$ ) over energy issues ( $n = 4$ ) and, even

more, climate issues ( $n = 1$ ).

With regards to our second research question, we can state that few ( $n = 5$ ) environment-related IGOs commit themselves to CPI and EnPI. However, a remarkably high number of environmental IGOs ( $n = 25$ ) do not refer to climate or energy goals in their primary law documents. In response to our third research question, we can state that in terms of frequency, EPI dominates over CPI and EnPI across the different types of IGOs.

We now turn to the assessment of our first research question. Table 3 presents four logit models, which are fitted in slightly different ways. Model 1 and 2 include the covariate *Multi-region* IGO in order to examine whether it produces significant coefficients. Model 1 differs from Model 2 to the extent that the first one includes the covariate *Membership size* and the second one a variable capturing whether an IGO belongs to the *United Nations*. Model 3 and 4 include a covariate for assessing whether an IGO has a geographical focus on *Europe*. Since the covariate *United Nations* would be less meaningful in this specification, only *Membership size* is included as control variable. Given the importance of whether the membership base is located in Europe, Model 3 excludes the covariate for the *United Kingdom*. Model 4 then additionally excludes the covariate that assesses whether the *EU Commission* is a member of an IGO.

In Model 1 and 2, the covariate for *Multi-region* produces negative and significant coefficients, indicating that IGOs consisting of diverse geographic membership are significantly less likely to commit themselves to EPI. If the *EU Commission* is a member of such organizations, their chances for embracing EPI increase. Compared to the ‘other’ category, IGOs that work on general economic issues (i.e. regional or global trade organizations) are more likely to make a normative commitment to EPI. The same holds true for multi-issue IGOs. Primary law texts adopted after 1987 entail a greater chance for an IGO to support EPI.

Turning to Model 3 and 4, the covariate for *Europe* produces a positive and significant coefficient, which indicates that IGOs with a Europe-based membership are more likely to commit themselves to EPI. IGOs working on general economic issues and multi-issue IGOs are more likely to embrace EPI. Lastly, the variable indicating whether a primary law text was adopted before or after 1987 (*Post 1987*) continues to produce positive and significant coefficients, but only at the 10%-level. As indicated by the Akaike Information Criterion (AIC), the model with the best fit is Model 3 as it has the lowest AIC value.

In terms of empirical support for the hypotheses, our logit models give way to the following picture. There is support for H1a and H1c, but

**Table 3**  
Determinants of IGO commitment to EPI.

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
	$\beta$	S.E.	$\beta$	S.E.	$\beta$	S.E.	$\beta$	S.E.
Multi-region	–3.678	(1.790)**	–3.381	(1.615)**				
Europe					3.540	(1.753)**	2.584	(1.446)*
United Kingdom	1.213	(1.266)	1.969	(1.200)				
EU Commission	2.279	(1.090)**	2.076	(1.036)**	1.173	(0.906)		
Energy	1.694	(1.405)	1.886	(1.429)	1.464	(1.397)	1.494	(1.240)
Bank	–3.072	(2.115)	–2.054	(1.923)	–2.367	(1.871)	–1.977	(1.607)
Commodity	1.981	(1.226)	2.619	(1.433)*	1.166	(1.082)	0.960	(0.968)
Economy general	4.729	(1.799)***	3.896	(1.476)***	4.490	(1.609)***	3.346	(1.252)***
Multi-issue	2.231	(1.286)*	2.360	(1.338)*	2.832	(1.403)**	2.240	(1.273)*
Other	– base level –							
Membership size	0.438	(0.294)			0.236	(0.172)		
United Nations			1.999	(1.292)				
Post 1987	2.685	(1.266)**	2.378	(1.140)**	2.335	(1.206)*	1.869	(0.992)*
Constant	–5.402	(2.247)**	–3.575	(1.403)**	–5.416	(2.257)**	–2.892	(1.132)**
N	50		50		50		50	
AIC	67.312		67.137		66.009		66.407	

Notes: Dependent variable = normative commitment to EPI (binary variable);  $\beta$  = logit coefficient; S.E. = standard error; AIC = Akaike Information Criterion; Significance levels: \*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

not for H1b. The coefficient for the *EU Commission's* membership fails to reach conventional levels of significance, but this can be explained by the inclusion of the covariate *Europe*. We can reject hypothesis H2a since in not a single model specification, an IGO's affiliation with the energy sector produced a coefficient that was significantly different from zero. We have support for H2b, but only for one subgroup of economy-related IGOs, i.e., organizations working on general economic issues. Across all models, we have support for H2c that postulates an increased likelihood of multi-issue IGOs to make a normative commitment to EPI. Yet in three of the four models, the effect is significant at the 10%-level only. Given the small number of cases, however, this finding is acceptable.

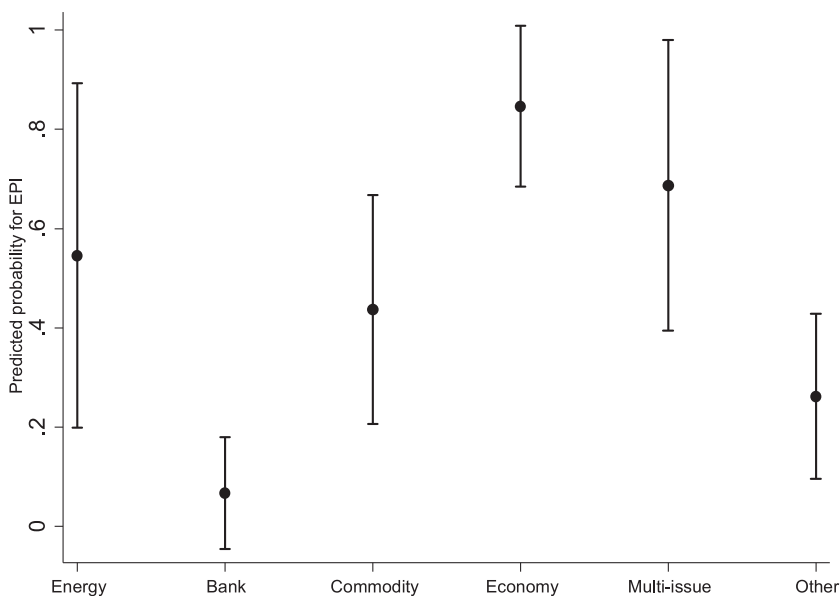
Considering that the sector affiliation plays an important role for the likelihood of an IGO to commit itself to EPI, Fig. 2 presents the predicted probabilities with 90% confidence intervals broken down by sector. We can infer from the figure that the predicated probability for EPI is greatest for an IGO working on general economic themes (i.e., trade organizations), but lowest for banks and funds. The latter is puzzling since these organizations are active in the field of development policy, which in the past has demonstrated an openness toward the

concept of policy integration (see [Tosun and Lang, 2017](#); [Tosun and Leininger, 2017](#)). This is one of the findings that offer a promising starting point for future research.

## 6. Conclusion

Policy integration has become increasingly popular among practitioners and scholars alike in the last few decades (Persson et al., this issue). In this study, we pursued the objective of learning whether and in which form IGOs make a normative commitment to EPI as well as to CPI and EnPI. By using original data, we could make several intriguing observations.

First, we were rather surprised to find so many instances of commitment to EPI. This finding speaks to the statement by [Nilsson et al. \(2009: 338\)](#) that pressures have been mounting on IGOs to integrate different policy areas. Yet in contrast to Nilsson et al., our analysis indicated that EPI is not something that the IGOs have just recently begun to do, but rather the outcome of decisions that date back for a few decades. From this perspective, it will be interesting to see whether the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals adopted in



**Fig. 2.** Predicted probabilities for EPI with 90% confidence intervals across sectoral IGOs.



2015—which promote policy integration — will give a new boost to the IGOs' commitment to policy integration (see Nilsson and Persson, 2017; Tosun and Leininger, 2017).

Second, our findings for the determinants of EPI lend additional support to the literature that accredits the EU growing influence in international environmental politics (e.g. Jørgensen et al., 2011; Kelemen and Vogel, 2010; Oberthür and Roche Kelly, 2008; Schulze and Tosun, 2013). The membership of the EU Commission correlates with a greater likelihood for an IGO to embrace EPI. When inspecting the IGOs that are limited in their geographic scope to Europe, their commitment to policy integration — with regard to environmental policy but also concerning climate policy — became even more visible.

Third, we could observe that environment-related IGOs also commit themselves to policy integration, but they do so less than energy-related or other IGOs. In this context, an unexpected observation was that climate and energy concerns are not as much addressed by environment-related IGOs as we would have expected.

Lastly, we believe this study is particularly insightful for learning about EnPI as we did not only concentrate on external integration but also assessed internal integration as proposed by Biermann et al. (2009), and therefore it can contribute to the emerging literature on that concept (see Maltby, 2013).

Despite the insights provided, there exist several ways in which this study can be improved. First, we here concentrated on primary law texts and did not consult policy strategies or other types of documents that may equally indicate a commitment to EPI or policy integration more generally. Consequently, in a next step, it could be promising to look into these more specific documents and to contrast them with the primary law texts. It is, in principle, possible that there exists a negative, a positive or even no relationship between the primary law texts and policy strategies or operational activities of IGOs. At any rate, a systematic analysis of this relationship appears to offer some interesting insights.

Second, we did not fully seize the institutional structure of IGOs and did not take into account the possibility that different organizational units may adopt different approaches to policy integration. When drawing on the primary legal texts, we mostly concentrated on the position of the governing body, which excludes the perspective of the secretariats and the role bureaucrats can play in embracing the concept of policy integration. As Johnson and Urpelainen (2014), for example, have shown, bureaucrats can be influential in shaping the institutional design of IGOs and therefore expanding the empirical focus to the secretariats might be instructive.

Third, there exists a whole battery of alternative explanatory variables that could have been used to explain why some IGOs are more committed to EPI than others. The literature in International Relations is a good place to look for these variables (e.g. Blake and Payton, 2015; Panke and Stapel, 2016; Tallberg et al., 2016; Van de Graaf, 2013), and the next step for taking this research agenda further is to test the effect of these variables on an expanded version of this dataset.

Fourth, this analysis adopted a very formal approach to policy integration, but it is clear that policy integration can only produce desirable effects when implemented properly. Consequently, a final proposal for future research is to examine the implementation of policy integration by the member states of IGOs (see, e.g., Jacob et al., 2008; Nilsson and Persson, 2017; Tosun and Leininger, 2017).

Overall, we are optimistic that the analytical framework applied here and the initial empirical insights can be an important bridge between different strands of literature. Most importantly perhaps, policy integration is a challenge faced by different governance units (global, regional, national, and local) alike, and therefore this study might help to reduce the dichotomies in the study of policy integration and the global governance in the fields of climate, energy, and the environment.

## Acknowledgements

We are grateful to the organizers and participants of the panel 'Environmental Policy Integration – Conceptual Foundations and Performance Evaluations' held at the ECPR General Conference in September 2016 in Prague. We thank Julian Erhardt and Linda Behrisch for research assistance, and Rana Chan and Zachary Herriges for editing the manuscript. This study is an outcome of the COST network INOGO – Innovations in Climate Governance (IS1309).

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